

Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
By email: LACommitteePTCS@parliament.act.gov.au

27 October 2023

Dear Committee Secretary

Expression of interest - Inquiry into the Territory Plan and other associated documents

Following on from our submission on the draft Territory Plan, we would like to express our interest in providing additional evidence to this Inquiry. We lay out the key issues we would look to speak to below.

A missed opportunity for housing and climate action

The new Territory Plan is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reset Canberra's approach to housing and urban planning for the better. For decades, Canberra's growth as a city has been defined by environmentally damaging suburban sprawl, heightened socio-economic segregation between poorer and richer suburbs, and a reliance on cars at the expense of creating truly communal, walkable neighbourhoods.

Failing to properly confront these issues within this Territory Plan will mean they continue to define Canberra's growth for the next decade. For the sake of Canberrans and the climate, we cannot afford such a delay.

Unfortunately, as it stands, the interim Territory Plan is a status quo document. It does next to nothing to enable the green, walkable neighbourhoods with medium-density and mid-rise housing that our city needs.

We particularly draw the Committee's attention to the fact that the interim Territory Plan:

- limits new housing in RZ1 to granny flats or dual occupancies
- continues to ban anything other than detached houses on the majority of RZ1 land by prohibiting block consolidation or multi-unit housing on blocks smaller than 800 sqm
- does little to expand housing opportunities around local centres, or along public and active transport corridors
- does nothing to reduce costly parking mandates so as to provide lower-cost housing to the 40% of Canberra households with only one car, or no cars

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- bans housing in the rapidly changing Phillip trades area, preventing the emergence of a second Lonsdale Street-style precinct in the Woden Town Centre
 - does not clearly articulate how it will accommodate up to 148,500 additional dwellings as projected by the District Strategies, with 52,500 dwellings not accounted for in current development plans or identified change areas but instead attributed to ‘potential urban regeneration areas’, which exist only as a plan to make plans at an indeterminable point in the future.

Canberrans deserve a positive vision for our city

The interim Territory Plan:

- is clearly inconsistent with the ACT’s climate commitments, in particular failing to address how it will help reduce car usage in the near term, or meaningfully promote a more compact city
- does not include meaningful zoning reform to enable additional infill housing supply, it is unclear how the 70/30 infill target will be met
- does not include zoned capacity or a plan to provide a third of the ACT’s needed housing capacity in the next 17 years, through to 2040
- does not include an effective model of RZ1 densification that will meaningfully contribute to infill housing.

The Assembly and the Government should take immediate action to fully adopt the [Missing Middle Canberra](#) platform, which has been endorsed by 15 community and business organisations, in the final Territory Plan. This would:

- provide the zoned capacity required to meet the 148,500 dwelling target for 2040, without requiring further major amendments to the plan
- ensure that the ACT can meet its 70/30 infill target
- improve active and public transport by facilitating higher residential density along existing active and public transport corridors, and by allowing Canberrans to purchase less parking space if they choose
- use an established and known set of zoning rules to achieve these goals, minimising implementation risk, uncertainty, complexity and delay.

We would welcome the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee on the merits of implementing Missing Middle Canberra in the new Territory Plan, and our other concerns with the interim plan’s compatibility with the ACT’s climate, housing, equality and liveability goals.

Yours sincerely,

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Convenor
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